

Serial No. 09/904,794

IN THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-20 (canceled).

Claim 21 (currently amended): Method for producing a food item comprising: flowing a flowable food product through a fill tube in a flow direction; and introducing a food ingredient into the flowing flowable food product in the fill tube through an entry point in the form of a first duct formed in a supply tube spaced from a free end of the supply tube, with the supply tube being formed by an annular wall extending from outside the fill tube to the free end and having an inner surface and an outer surface, with flowing the flowable food product comprising flowing the flowable food product to contact the outer surface, with introducing the food ingredient comprising flowing the food ingredient within the inner surface, with the first duct extending at an acute angle in the annular wall of the supply tube and extending in the supply tube opposite to the flow direction, with the free end located inside of the fill tube, with the supply tube extending into the fill tube in the flow direction, with the supply tube having a cross sectional size considerably smaller than the fill tube so as not to adversely affect the flowable food material flowing through the fill tube, with the first duct terminating at the outer surface and not presenting a ledge in the fill tube behind which the flow of food product can build up, with the first duct terminating at the inner surface and not blocking the flow of the food ingredient in the supply tube, with introducing the food ingredient comprising flowing the food ingredient through the supply tube and through the first duct at the acute angle for introduction being introduced into the flow of flowable food product opposite to the flow direction and in a pattern which does not intermix throughout the flowable food material after the flowable food material passes through the fill tube.

Claim 22 (original): The method of claim 21 with flowing the flowable food product comprising flowing the flowable food product through the fill tube including a fill pipe and an injection tube extending from the fill pipe, with the supply tube extending through the injection tube and into the fill pipe.

Claim 23 (original): The method of claim 22 with introducing the food ingredient comprising introducing the food ingredient through the supply tube which is generally linear straight and which has an end opening located generally adjacent to an inside surface of the fill tube.

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Claim 24 (original): The method of claim 23 with introducing the food ingredient comprising introducing the food ingredient through the supply tube which is generally vertical in the fill pipe.

Claim 25 (original): The method of claim 21 with flowing the flowable food product comprising flowing a cultured dairy product through the fill tube.

Claim 26 (original): The method of claim 25 with introducing the food ingredient comprising introducing the food ingredient being a carminic acid adjusted to a pH of below 12 and above 9.5.

Claim 27 (original): The method of claim 25 with flowing the flowable food product comprising flowing yogurt through the fill tube; and with introducing the food ingredient comprising supplying the food ingredient in the form of dye, pigment or colorant.

Claim 28 (original): The method of claim 27 with flowing the flowable food product comprising flowing yogurt having a viscosity of 8,000 to 40,000 cps at around 5°C.

Claim 29 (previously presented): The method of claim 21 with introducing the food ingredient comprising introducing the food ingredient into the flow of flowable food product in an irregular and random shape.

Claims 30-31 (canceled).

Claim 32 (previously presented): The method of claim 21 with introducing the food ingredient comprising providing the supply tube; and drilling the first duct in the supply tube at the acute angle.

Claim 33 (currently amended): The method of claim 32 with introducing the food ingredient comprising introducing the food ingredient into the flowing flowable food product in the fill tube through the entry point in the form of a second duct formed in the supply tube spaced axially from the free end of the supply tube, with the second duct extending at an acute angle in the annular wall of the supply tube and extending in the supply tube opposite to the flow direction.

Claim 34 (currently amended): The method of claim 33 with the second duct being spaced from the first duct in the flow direction, with all ducts formed in the supply tube being spaced from each other in the flow direction.

Claim 35 (previously presented): The method of claim 34 with the first and second ducts being on opposite sides of the supply tube.

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Claim 36 (previously presented): The method of claim 35 with the supply tube having an outside diameter with the first duct being spaced from the free end generally eight times the outside diameter and the second duct being spaced from the free end generally ten times the outside diameter.

Claim 37 (previously presented): The method of claim 36 with the first and second ducts having a diameter in the order of one half of the outside diameter of the supply tube.

Claim 38 (previously presented): The method of claim 35 with the first and second ducts being in a same diametric plane.

Claim 39 (previously presented): The method of claim 38 with the acute angle of the first duct being equal to the acute angle of the second duct.

Claim 40 (previously presented): The method of claim 39 with the acute angle being 45°.

Claim 41 (currently amended): The method of claim 21 with introducing the food ingredient comprising introducing the food ingredient into the flowing flowable food product in the fill tube through the entry point in the form of a second duct formed in the supply tube spaced axially from the free end of the supply tube, with the second duct extending at an acute angle in the annular wall of the supply tube and extending in the supply tube opposite to the flow direction.

Claim 42 (currently amended): The method of claim 41 with the second duct being spaced from the first duct in the flow direction, with all ducts formed in the supply tube being spaced from each other in the flow direction.

Claim 43 (previously presented): The method of claim 42 with the first and second ducts being on opposite sides of the supply tube.

Claim 44 (previously presented): The method of claim 43 with the supply tube having an outside diameter with the first duct being spaced from the free end generally eight times the outside diameter and the second duct being spaced from the free end generally ten times the outside diameter.

Claim 45 (previously presented): The method of claim 44 with the first and second ducts having a diameter in the order of one half of the outside diameter of the supply tube.

Claim 46 (previously presented): The method of claim 45 with the first and second ducts being in a same diametric plane.

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Claim 47 (previously presented): The method of claim 46 with the acute angle of the first duct being equal to the acute angle of the second duct.

Claim 48 (previously presented): The method of claim 47 with the acute angle being 45°.

Claim 49 (previously presented): The method of claim 41 with the first and second ducts being on opposite sides of the supply tube.

Claim 50 (previously presented): The method of claim 49 with the first and second ducts having a diameter in the order of one half of the outside diameter of the supply tube.

Claim 51 (previously presented): The method of claim 50 with the first and second ducts being in a same diametric plane.

Claim 52 (previously presented): The method of claim 51 with the acute angle of the first duct being equal to the acute angle of the second duct.

Claim 53 (previously presented): The method of claim 52 with the acute angle being 45°.

Claim 54 (previously presented): The method of claim 21 with the acute angle being 45°.